

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

In the specification, please amend the paragraph spanning page 2, line 23 - page 3, line 14, as follows:

Proposals have been made for an exposure monitoring method with attention on exposure control, in "A. Starikov, "Exposure monitor structure", SPIE ~~Vol. 1264~~ Integrated Circuit Metrology, Inspection, and Process Control 4 ~~(1990)~~ IV, Vol. 1261, 1990, p. 315 and in Japanese Patent Laid-Open No. 2000-310850. The proposals have a common characteristic in that, in a stepper, an image is transferred with an inclined exposure distribution by using a reticle having a pattern therein with a dimensional ratio (a duty ratio) of a transparent portion and an opaque portion continuously changed in one direction by a pitch that cannot resolve images on the semiconductor substrate. By use of this method, a variation distribution of an effective optimum exposure dose in resist mask pattern formation can be provided. Meanwhile, there is also a known method of forming patterns provided with an inclined distribution of irradiation by means of continuously disposing a plurality of patterns having different transmittances (see "~~SPIE Integrated Circuit Metrology, Inspection, and Process Control 4~~ Optical Microlithography IX", Vol. 2726, 1996, p. 799).